

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

# HOMILETIC MAGAZINE.

---

VOL. X.

JULY, 1912.

No. 7.

---

## Sermon on the Epistle for Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

ROM. 6, 3—11.

This text is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In the chapters preceding our Epistle-lesson, the one great theme of Paul has been the universality of man's sin and of God's grace. He has shown that both Jew and Gentile are sinners, and therefore under the condemnation of the just and righteous God. For "as many as have sinned without Law" — *i. e.*, the Gentiles — "shall also perish without Law: and as many as have sinned in the Law" — *i. e.*, the Jews — "shall be judged by the Law," Rom. 2, 12. Sin and the guilt and curse of sin are universal. But so is the grace of God. Man, the sinner, cannot save himself. But God has accomplished the impossible. He had mercy upon all, Rom. 11, 32, and sent His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Redeemer of all. Jesus Christ has redeemed, purchased, and won all men "from all sins," etc., "not with gold or silver, but with," etc. And now, "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have," etc. That is the way of salvation, *viz.*, by the grace of God, for Christ's sake, through faith. That is the theme St. Paul has elaborated in the previous chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, and that is the one grand theme of all Christian preaching, *viz.*, salvation without man's works, by the grace of God.

But is this not a pernicious doctrine? Will not men abuse it and make of it a cloak of maliciousness, 1 Pet. 2, 16? Perhaps they will, but the fault is not with grace, but with man's perverse heart. Grace for the sinner does not give him liberty to sin. That is the central idea elaborated by St. Paul in our text. Swept away, as it were, by the magnitude of divine grace which is able to save sinners, Paul had broken out into the words: "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound," Rom. 5, 20. Some one, hearing this, might say, Why, that is welcome news. Let us, then, live in sin, in order that

God's grace may have an opportunity to abound! The more we live in sin the greater will be the miracle of divine grace in saving us. Paul forestalls any such rash conclusions. He raises that very objection: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" and answering with an emphatic "God forbid!" he goes on to show how utterly impossible and illogical it would be for Christians to continue in sin. Let us make that question and answer of the Apostle the subject of our present study.

"SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN? GOD FORBID!" For

1. *By baptism into Christ we are dead to sin;*
2. *By baptism into Christ we are alive to God.*

### 1.

God forbid that we Christians who have been saved by grace should continue in sin, says the Apostle. And why should we not continue in sin? Paul answers by asking another question (v. 2), "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" The argument of the Apostle is this, We Christians are dead to sin, and therefore can no longer live therein.

But how does he make that out, that we Christians are dead to sin? He says: "Or [Greek original] know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into [His] death," vv. 3. 4. Paul argues from a fact well known to every Christian, *viz.*, from the fact that we all have been baptized into Jesus Christ, and by such baptism have been made partakers of His death and burial. That is a fact, he would say, which you all know very well, and of which I therefore need only to remind you. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," Gal. 3, 26, and have thereby been brought into the closest possible union with Christ and with His death and burial.

Now what does that mean to us? To understand this, we must ask, What does the death of Christ mean? The Apostle answers by saying: "In that He died He died unto sin," v. 10 a. The death of Christ was brought on by sin. Death is the wages of sin, Rom. 6, 23. That is true always and everywhere. That is true also of the death of Jesus. His death also was the wages of sin. Only, that sin on account of which He died was not His own, not sin which He had committed. "He was delivered for *our* offenses," Rom. 4, 25. He had taken upon Himself the sins of the world, and died to atone for them. And by His death He really did atone for them. His death is full satisfaction for all the sins of all the world. "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John 1, 7. By His death Jesus Christ has satisfied all demands of divine justice and righteousness. Sin, therefore, has lost its power to condemn us.

Through the death of Jesus Christ, the guilt and curse of sin have been abolished; righteousness, life, and salvation have been won.

And now remember, you have been baptized into the death of Christ. Through your baptism you have been made a partaker of Christ. Baptism is a real means of grace. Through it you have been made a partaker of the righteousness which Christ has wrought through His suffering and death. The grace of God is upon you, you are a child of God—all through your baptism into Christ.

What does that mean to you? If it means anything at all, it means that you, as a baptized and pardoned sinner, cannot continue in sin. If you would continue in sin, and willingly serve sin, you would set at naught the redemption from the guilt and curse of sin of which you have been made a partaker by your baptism. You would forfeit the righteousness of Christ; the whole load and burden of your sins would again be upon you. Christ would have died in vain for you. You would forfeit your sonship with God, and would again be under God's curse and condemnation. No, the very grace of God of which you have been made a partaker by your baptism obligates you to live in sin no longer. With Christ you have died unto sin, and therefore cannot any longer live in sin.

But note, the Apostle says of Christ: "In that He died He died unto sin *once*," v. 10 a. Note *that*! When Christ died, He was through with sin once and forever. Sin, the sin of the world, no longer lay upon Him, and no longer could make any demands upon Him. He had satisfied the extreme demand of sin, death, and therefore sin no longer has any claims against Him. "For he that is dead is freed from sin," v. 7. Now you have been made a partaker of the death of Christ through your baptism. You share with Him also this fruit of His death, that by it sin has lost its dominion over Him. You "have been planted together in the likeness of His death," v. 5, also in this respect.

What does *that* mean to you? The Apostle tells you, *viz.*, "that our old man is crucified with Him," v. 6. Our old man, or the old Adam, is "our entire sinful depravity which has come upon us by the fall of Adam, and is ours by birth." It is the evil inclination of our heart, the lust and the desire to sin. Of this old Adam the Apostle says, he has been "*crucified* with Him." By baptism we are partakers of the death of Christ and also of the *mode* of His death. Note that word "*crucified*." Our old Adam is crucified, that means he is not yet entirely dead, though *doomed* to certain death. A person nailed to the cross was not dead instantly. So our old Adam is not yet entirely dead. Alas! he still is very much alive and very active, and still causes us a great deal of trouble. But, nevertheless, he is *crucified* and doomed to certain death. The poor culprit nailed to the cross, though not instantly dead, had lost his freedom and the power to do as he pleased. He was entirely in the power and under

the control of those who had crucified him. Even so through baptism our old Adam is crucified with Christ. You are, through baptism into the death of Christ, free not only from the guilt and curse of sin, but also from the dominion of sin. You, as a baptized believer in Jesus Christ, are no longer a servant and slave of sin. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," v. 14. Sin is no longer your master, — you *need* not serve sin, — but *you* are the master over *sin* and your old Adam.

How now, you Christians? Can you continue in sin that the grace of God might abound? Can you henceforth live in sin? Is that the purpose for which Christ has redeemed you from the power of sin and broken the bonds of slavery for you? Is that the purpose for which your old Adam has been crucified, that you should take him down from the cross again and nurse him back into life? God forbid! You know better. Being freed from the bondage of sin, you would not be such fools as to go right back into the slavery of sin, which inevitably leads you to eternal damnation. Your old Adam is crucified together with Christ "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should *not* serve sin," v. 6. You are dead to sin through your baptism into the death of Christ. You are freed from sin, v. 7. What a contradiction, what an inconsistency, then, if you would continue in sin! You cannot do it, and at the same time be and remain a pardoned, a free child of God.

## 2.

No, Christians cannot continue in sin, for *by their baptism into Christ they have been quickened into a new life, and are alive to God.* That is the second argument whereby the Apostle shows how utterly impossible and what a contradiction it would be if Christians would continue in sin.

Christ died and was buried. But that was not the end of Him. He did not suffer and die simply to be dead and buried, but He suffered all those things ordained in the eternal counsel of God, and died that He might enter into His glory, Luke 24, 26. And so it was done. For, as the Apostle states, "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," v. 4. On the third day, "God raised Him up, having loosed the pains of death," Acts 2, 24. And thereby Jesus entered into a new life, a life entirely different from that in which He had His conversation before His death and resurrection. "In that He liveth He liveth unto God," says the Apostle, v. 10 b. Before He died, Christ was under sin, the sin of the world. He labored under this burden all the days of His life. But that is all different now. Now "He liveth unto God;" He has nothing to do with sin and the labors of sin any more, but lives entirely and continually in that new life into which He entered by His resurrection.

And now remember, we have been baptized into Jesus Christ.

That means, we have been made partakers also of the resurrection and of the new life of Jesus, the risen Lord. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection," v. 5. "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing," etc., vv. 8. 9. That could not be otherwise; the death and the resurrection of Christ belong together, you cannot separate one from the other. If by baptism we have been made partakers of His death and burial, then also of His resurrection and His new life.

What does that mean? It means that by baptism into Jesus Christ a new life has been created in us. We have been made to share that new godlike life into which Jesus entered by His resurrection. And thus it is. For baptism is "the washing of regeneration," Tit. 3, 5. By it we are re-generated, born again, born into a life in which we formerly were not. Through our baptism, we who were dead in trespasses and sins have been quickened together with Christ and have been raised up together with Him, Eph. 2, 1. 5. 6. We are now, through our baptism into Jesus Christ, alive to God through Christ, endowed with a new, spiritual life and the power to will and to do the things pleasing to God.

Need I point out the obligation under which that puts us? We have been quickened into a new life with Christ, and now we are alive to God. For what purpose? That we should commit spiritual suicide, lapse back into the old life and continue in sin? God forbid! But, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should *walk* in newness of life." God has given us that new, spiritual life, not that we should destroy it by sin, but that we should foster it and walk in it. He has given us those new spiritual powers, not that we should permit them to waste away from lack of exercise, but that we should use them and, by using, strengthen them. Like Christ, who, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, but liveth forever unto God, so we also, being raised from spiritual death into spiritual life, should henceforth not die the spiritual death again, but live unto God, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. 2, 12. Our baptism into Christ, through which we have been made alive unto God, obligates us to that.

Is, then, my friends, the doctrine of free salvation by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus without the works or cooperation of man a pernicious doctrine? Does it give liberty to sin? May Christians continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! For the pardoned sinner to continue in sin would be a perversion and an abuse of grace. The very fact that you are *saved* by grace obligates you no longer to live unto sin, but unto God. Oh, remember this, my friends! Remember it in the hour of temptation; remember it when your old Adam strives for mastery. Remember then that your

old Adam is *crucified* together with Christ. And though he may wriggle and squirm and cause you much trouble and discomfort, still, in the power of Jesus whom you have put on in holy baptism, *you* are master, and finally will come out victorious. Remember, you are alive with Jesus. You have the power in the strength of Jesus to overcome all temptations and to live a holy and God-pleasing life. Oh, then, my friends: "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord," v. 11. "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's," and "live unto Him which died for you and rose again." Amen.

THEO. BUNDENTHAL.

## Sermon on the Gospel for Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

MATT. 7, 15—24.

IN CHRIST, OUR REDEEMER, DEARLY BELOVED:—

At the head of our text rides the Herald of the Lord and from the trumpet at His lips rings forth that warning sound, "Beware!" How many have taken heed when this word sounded in their ears! How many ships have safely crossed the bar, because the danger signal spoke in forcible language, "Beware!" Who would number the many occasions when drowning was prevented by the timely cry, "Beware of the treacherous deep!" How many youths were saved from eternal perdition as they passed by the places of lustful amusements, because a watchful parent or a dutiful pastor called, "Beware!" Truly, this word has a wide scope. It is the call of the watch on the top-mast, of the sentinel on the walls of Zion. Happy is the man who heeds the warning. His feet will not slip over the brink of eternal damnation; he will be safely guided to the home of happiness and joy above.

To gain this end, the Lord Jesus calls to us in our text, Beware, lest you be lost forever! He warns against a special danger of our souls. This warning call is necessary in our days of enlightenment also, yea, now more so than ever before. In order that we may learn the importance of this warning, let me show you:

### THE WARNING OF JESUS AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS.

We consider,

1. *That false prophets still exist to-day;*
2. *Wherein their main pitfalls consist;*
3. *How we may know them.*

#### 1.

"Beware of false prophets!" says our Lord, the Good Shepherd, who fain would save His sheep. Who are these prophets? What is their office and work? The true prophets of old had the duty to

preach to the people of Israel all the revelations of God and the visions in which He appeared to them. Their words were as powerful and authoritative as though God had spoken them in person. Woe unto the people if they disobeyed the words of the prophets! The Lord visited their iniquities upon them unto the third and fourth generation. We would call your attention to Jeremiah only who prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, the Babylonian captivity, and the ill fate of those Jews who emigrated to Egypt. The Jews repaid him who prophesied these coming events by persecuting and setting captive this servant of God. What was the result? All those gloomy forecasts of Jeremiah came true, so that Israel was obliged to acknowledge Jeremiah a true prophet sent by God. Thus the people were compelled to obey the prophets whom God had anointed to be proclaimers of His will.

At the time when Jeremiah told Israel about this sad future, there arose other so-called prophets who spoke of a glorious future and denied all that Jeremiah had said. How did they gain a hearing at the court? They claimed divine authority for their words and denounced Jeremiah as one not sent by Jehovah. And they spoke with great force and power, and all Israel hearkened to them, because they prophesied in their favor. These men were false, lying prophets, because God had commanded them nothing, nor were they sent by the Lord. They were commissioned and prompted by Satan, for they catered to human favor, and were anything but scrupulous about the truth. As far back as at the time of Ezekiel the Lord complains: "And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken." Forsooth, a strong sentence on the heads of the false prophets and a true exhibition of their falsity. They divine, invent lies, their mouths are as open graves full of poisonous odors, leading those who follow them to destruction.

Hence our Lord is very serious in our Gospel-lesson when warning His disciples, "Beware of false prophets!" Now you, my friends, may rejoin: It may be true that at the time of Christ false prophets arose, but they are no longer found to-day. Is that so, my friends? Did not Jesus say expressly concerning our days that in the last days false Christs and false prophets would arise in great numbers? Does not His warning apply to our age? We should rather think so. All so-called ministers of the Gospel that do not preach the Word of God, but things calculated to please both the believer and the unbeliever, are false prophets whether they put on a sanctimonious countenance or openly confess their heresies. All those teaching erroneously concerning the central doctrines of justification and of the means of grace, Gospel and sacraments, are false prophets. It matters not whether the Bible or the Book of Mormon decorates

their churches, if they do not teach the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, they come under the head of those against whom the Lord sounds these warning words, "Beware of false prophets!" Every Christian well versed in Scriptures knows full well that he need not go to the remotest end of the globe to find these instruments of Satan, but that they may be found everywhere, if we but keep on the alert. So false prophets still exist, and Jesus' earnest warning, "Beware!" is highly necessary even to-day.

But you will ask, Which are the pitfalls of these teachers? In what does their particular danger consist?

## 2.

The danger arising from false prophets is shown by the word "false." They assume a role that insidiously hides their true character. This our Lord very plainly sets forth in the beginning of our text, saying: "Beware of false prophets . . . wolves." Their outward appearance would not excite suspicion. Who would fear a lamb, a sheep, this emblem of innocence and meekness? Thus false prophets appear meek, very agreeable, and consequently no danger is suspected by those who hear them. They even strut about in robes of sanctity. We have heard them say, "Ever since we were 'converted' on the mourner's bench, we have been perfectly holy; we sin no more." Holiness seems to be written on their very faces; they have donned a mask of sanctity. Who would suspect anything wrong? Not the simple-minded Christian, who trusts every one, and least of all would he eye closely a so-called minister of the Gospel.

But what is the true nature of these false prophets? "Inwardly they are ravening wolves," our text tells us. Now if anybody would see a ravening wolf approach him, would he go to meet him and say, "Let us be friends!"? Would he not, on the contrary, flee from him and keep at a safe distance? The flock seeing the fierce enemy runs with all possible speed, lest the wolf catch and destroy them. Thus the false prophets are, in reality, ravening wolves, and their sole object is to enter the fold of Christians and kill their souls. But how do they gain entrance to the fold? By donning the sheepskin. What hellish guile! Why should the Christian of simple faith suspect one who comes in this perfect disguise? These prophets apparently come to save souls by the Gospel, but in reality, as far as they teach false doctrine, they destroy them. Hence let us not underestimate this danger. "Beware of false prophets!"

Another pitfall is their saying, "Lord, Lord!" so frequently that many a poor Christian of simple faith is misled by this method of the false prophets, thinking that surely must be the true Church where the Lord's name is used so profusely. But Jesus nevertheless calls such preachers false prophets, for they do not do the will of His Father which is in heaven. If they did, they would believe in

the First-begotten of the Father and would not err in the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. Hence their continually saying, "Lord, Lord!" is but a pitfall to entrap unwary souls.

Lastly, a snare laid by the false prophets for Christians are their vaunted wonderful deeds, as we read in our text: "Many will say to me . . . work iniquity!" We need not deny that some false prophets, like Alexander Dowie, Christian Science healers, spiritualistic mediums, etc., at times do things that seem miraculous. The Lord expressly says: "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," Matt. 24, 24. Even Antichrist comes "with all power and signs and lying wonders," 2 Thess. 2, 9. But because they are false teachers, our Lord spurns them from His throne of glory as workers of iniquity, telling them, "I knew you not. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!"

Let us, therefore, prove the spirits whether their doctrine be of God or of Satan. Let us probe the sheepskin and not be deceived by an outward show of holiness and a frequent use of the Lord's name.

But you will ask, How may I know the false prophets? This we would consider lastly.

### 3.

Our Lord very briefly says, "By their fruits ye shall know them," *i. e.*, you must watch for the results, for the fruits they bear. Now in nature this task is comparatively easy, as Jesus says: "Do men gather grapes . . . ye shall know them." So much every one of you has learned concerning plants, the Lord would say. You do not look for grapes on a thorn-bush nor for figs on a thistly brier. Neither do you expect a good tree to bear evil fruit nor a decayed one to be loaded down with luscious fruits. Now apply this to the false prophets. They are not healthful trees, hence their fruit is evil. Prove their doctrine! Do they apply the Law and the Gospel properly? Do they not often teach neither Law nor Gospel, or put the Law in the place of the Gospel and teach salvation more or less by man's own efforts? Do they not, on the one hand, make the Gospel a new law, rob it of its sweetness, or, on the other hand, make it a head-rest for impenitent sinners? — Again, does not the golden apple usually grow on such trees? Is not filthy lucre the end and aim of many prophets? Think of Dowie and Mrs. Eddy, the founder of Christian Science. How many so-called evangelists must cast down their eyes in shame when arraigned before the final tribunal, because the Gospel of Christ was to them a means for enriching themselves.

Probably the most apparent and easily observed fruit to-day is the production of hypocrites by the false doctrine of perfect sanctification in this life, of an uplifting outward morality — a teaching

entirely anti-Scriptural. — Watch for these various fruits! Turn the search-light of Holy Writ upon them, and surely you will know the false prophets. —

Having heard, then, that false prophets still exist to-day, and what snares they set for us, let us be on the alert, let us watch and pray that we may not be torn asunder by the dreadful fangs of these ravening wolves, but, guarded by our Good Shepherd, may be safely kept in His heavenly fold forever. Amen. W. O. LEITZ.

---

## Sermon on 1 Tim. 1, 15.

---

Although the whole Bible is the Word of God, and in consequence every verse of this sacred book of greater intrinsic value than heaven and earth, still there is a difference to be recognized in the relative value of Bible verses. Some verses excel others in brilliancy; some are more precious, more glorious, more comforting than others. As we regard every luminary body that bejewels the canopy of the skies as issuing from the omnipotent *fiat* of God, though observing a difference between the sun, moon, and stars relative to their respective brilliancy and usefulness, even so we accept all passages of Holy Writ as precious words of God, still some verses are more precious, more glorious, and of more endearing worth than others.

Among the verses of the Bible which shine forth with particular brilliancy and have for centuries sent forth their beneficent, warm, and illuminating rays into the darkness of this world, are those beautiful golden texts, John 3, 16; Matt. 18, 11; and the words of our text: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." These words ought to be memorized and treasured by every man and indelibly written upon the shrine of every human heart. Let us bask in the sunlight that streams from this word at this opening session of Synod in order that it may quicken us for the work which we contemplate doing in these days.

CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.

Let us consider,

1. *That this is a faithful saying;*
2. *That it is worthy of all acceptance.*

### 1.

Our text has been taken from Paul's First Epistle to Timothy. Timothy was a preacher of the Gospel at Ephesus. In his epistles to Timothy, Paul instructs this young preacher in matters pertaining to the manner in which he is to perform the functions of his ministerial office. Above all else he sets forth what the contents of his sermons should be. In our text the Apostle tells Timothy: You must preach, and again and again preach, and tell young and old, and all committed to your charge, "that Christ Jesus came into the world;" the Son of God has appeared upon earth, put on flesh, and

become our brother, in order to save sinners, to forgive them their sins, and to take them into heaven. The doctrine of the reconciliation of the world by the blood of Jesus Christ must be the beginning, middle, and end of all of your preaching and teaching in your congregation. And to your hearers say: "I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

You will observe that Paul, in the first place, affirms that the saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is a faithful saying, infallibly true, and credible. This doctrine has ever been gainsaid by many. When the shepherds of Bethlehem voiced the gladsome message, "Christ is born!" their words apparently fell upon unresponsive hearts. During His personal ministry, Jesus filled all Israel with the divine declaration: "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost;" and but few accepted the message. When the disciples went into all the world and preached the Gospel of Christ Jesus, the Son of God and the Savior of the world, they met with violent and persistent opposition. And in our apostate age the so-called wise and prudent openly declare: The story of the incarnation of the Son of God for the redemption of the world is a myth which no intelligent mind can accept.

But what does St. Paul say? "This is a *faithful* saying," *i. e.*, this truth rests upon an impregnable foundation. No truth to which man assents has been more convincingly evidenced, none has ever been raised so high above the surging waves of doubt, as this saying: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Were all else to appear unstable, this truth must abide: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And why? Because this is not a human, but a divine truth, the sum total of Holy Writ. Human knowledge depends upon the testimony of our fellow-men or upon our own observation. You are, *e. g.*, certain of the existence of the German empire; you know that in it at present a wise emperor reigns, that he has a great army. Upon what do you rest your conviction? You have never been there; you have never seen the emperor with your own eyes. You depend upon the judgment and testimony of others who have been there and bear witness to what they have seen. Again, you know that, when the cold blasts of winter give way to the balmy breezes of the spring, the trees begin to sprout, and verdure again adorns the earth. This certainty rests upon the experience and the observation which you have made for many years. And thus it is with all human knowledge. It rests upon the testimony of others, or upon your own observation. With regard to such knowledge, however, you will have observed that men not infrequently report incorrectly, or err in their judgment; yea, even our own observation is not wholly trustworthy. And, in consequence, we frequently experience that truths to which we adhere for a season are discarded shortly as manifest errors, that suppositions which profound scholars have acclaimed as great verities are soon ridiculed as palpable absurdities.

How different relative to its stability is the sentence: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This is, as Paul says, a faithful saying. If everything were to become unstable and fall, this sentence could not be swept away into the débris of rejected

human hypotheses, but must remain forever certainly true. For this saying is a divine truth. The certainty "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" does not rest upon the testimony of fallible men nor upon our own observation, but solely upon the testimony of God. At diverse times God, by the mouth of many prophets, by the testimony of apostles, and especially by the declarations of His only-begotten Son, in unmistakable terms declared that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Yea, and he enhances this testimony with a solemn oath. And God cannot lie; God cannot err. "For the Word of the Lord is right, and all His works are done in truth." "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent." John, therefore, concludes: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son," 1 John 5, 9—11.

O my brethren in the ministry and in our parochial schools, how glorious is the office into which we have been inducted! Ah, we are eminent, distinguished teachers! Whilst the Christ-inimical world gropes in darkness, vainly striving to find the water that will assuage the thirst of the soul, we can arise and boldly and joyfully proclaim before literate and illiterate, old and young, the divinely assured message: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And oh, how blessed are the members of our congregations, which are not led to rest the interests of their immortal souls upon the fallible suppositions of human philosophy, but upon the impregnable and infallible Word of God, faithfully and constantly proclaimed in our churches, taught in our schools, and applied at sick- and death-beds.

## 2.

But Paul does not only affirm that the word, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is a faithful saying, but adds that it is "worthy of all acceptation." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Note here that the mouth of the Lord explicitly declares: The Gospel of Christ is so precious, and so sublime, and so sweet as to be worthy of being accepted by every soul. This we shall recognize most readily if we pause a moment to meditate upon the fact: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." A sinner is a man who has rebelled against the Lord, transgressed God's holy laws, and who, in consequence, has merited God's wrath and displeasure, and been condemned to death and damnation. In order to save lost and condemned mankind from the fiery pains and pangs of hell, "Christ Jesus came into the world." No matter how deep man may have fallen, Jesus would raise him up; no matter how repugnant and loathsome a sinner may have become, Christ Jesus would cleanse him; no matter how long he may have done hell's bidding, Jesus would reclaim him. As an attestation and confirmation

of this blessed truth, and in order to persuade even the vilest of men to make a saving approach unto Jesus, Paul in the context points to his own example. I, says Paul, even I, "who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," who destroyed the Church of Christ, breathing hatred against the Christ, and was an offense to many and perverted the faith of many, even "I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Ah, beloved, must not your hearts assent to the fact that the message, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is worthy of all acceptation, since its acceptance suddenly transforms, as a divine *fiat*, damned sinners into children of God, and translates from the kingdom of darkness into the realms of spiritual light?

If a messenger with proper credentials were to appear in one of our penal institutions and in clarion tones announce, "Listen, O ye criminals, you are all pardoned, no matter how serious your offense, no matter how severe the penalty imposed may be,—you are free!" would not these guilty men seize upon the opportunity with joyous acclaim and with quickened steps hasten out of their dark cells with a hymn of praise upon hearts and lips for their liberation? Imagine, if you will, a ship upon mid-ocean. The sharp, piercing cry, "Fire, fire!" suddenly rends the air and fills all on board with consternation. The scent of the smoke, the flames unarrested in their destructive work forces all to the conviction: "we are lost!" But whilst the stoutest heart is sinking into despair, a voice is heard telling of the approach of a ship on rescue bent. Ah, my friends, with what sincere shouts of joy would the assurance be received and the liberators hailed.—But what is an earthly penal institution compared with the eternal prison of hell? What is a temporal death by fire compared with the unquenchable flames and torments of the fiery pit? In this season of grace the message is brought to us lost and condemned sinners: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He will wash us clean with His holy, precious blood; He will absolve us from punishment and guilt; He will open our prison-cell and save us from the fires of hell, and will lead us into His eternal and blessed kingdom. O beloved, is not this word worthy of acceptation, worthy of being received by every soul? Ought it not be wafted from mouth to mouth and carried by heralds to the uttermost parts of the earth? Ought not the whole world sing and speak of it?

But, sad to say, this is not done. The vast majority of men remain cold and indifferent to the proclamation of this blessed message, reject it, yea, even scoff and ridicule it, and thus bring upon themselves swift destruction. Let us, my brethren, accept this precious word, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and joyfully greet our Physician and Savior. Then deliverance has come to us in time and eternity. Let us labor and during these sessions of Synod mutually quicken our purposes to bring this blessed news to our fellow-men. Let us become more zealous in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, and gladly place all our powers of body and soul, our possessions and our blood upon the altar of service. Can you conceive of a more blessed service than to bring this message which God Himself declares to

be worthy of all acceptance to our fellow-men, the message that is able to save to the uttermost lost and condemned sinners? God grant that the words of our text may continually, and especially during these days of Synod, illumine our hearts and shed their sublime luster far and near, the words: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen."

F. Pf.; tr. by G. Sch.

## Sermon Outline for Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 5, 1—11.

"Our office begins where sin begins," says Luther. An important rule for Church and its ministers. Church and ministry have to do with man in so far as he is a sinner, with sin and sinner. — Many callings and ordinances have to do with man, but each in a different respect, in its own sphere: government, with man as subject, to be protected or restrained and coerced; judge, as guilty or innocent; physician, as ill or healthy. A judge as such does not inquire into the health of the man brought before his tribunal, etc. — Church and ministry have to do with *sin*, no more and no less. Whether a man does this work or another, whether he builds a house of his own or rents one, whether he votes the Democratic or the Republican ticket, whether he marries this person or another, or not at all, — and the like, all this does not concern the ministry as long as sin does not enter. But all things, of what nature they may otherwise be, that are in themselves sinful, or with regard to which sin may be committed, things regarding which God's Word teaches the Christian, with respect to which conscience is to be informed and advised, etc. — This rule applies also to the daily work of a Christian. God's Word speaks of it; part of Christian living; therefore proper and necessary subject for instruction. Our text.

### THE CHRISTIAN AND SECULAR WORK.

#### 1. A Christian *MAY* work.

Seems self-evident. Who would doubt or deny it? Yet —. The spiritually blind people of this world cannot understand the Christian. Think: a man that intends to shape his life according to dictates of the Bible is entirely unfit for any practical purposes. He is not to love the world nor the things in the world. Is to be heavenly minded. Is stranger and pilgrim on earth. His conversation, treasure, heart, and home is in heaven. He is to set his affection on things above, not on things of the earth; not to lay up for himself treasures upon earth; to take no thought for the morrow; to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. His main care is to save his own soul and others. He is to hear, read, and meditate on God's Word, pray, sing, etc. Such a Christian would have neither time nor inclination nor ability for anything else on earth. And if he did, he must

neglect his Christian duties or be a hypocrite in his Christian profession.

Papists represent secular work: living in matrimony, filling position of father and mother, servant, etc., as something worldly, almost unclean, unbecoming a Christian. They extol the idle life of monks, nuns, anchorites, as something higher, more spiritual and perfect. "Religiosi." Before Luther's time, when popery exerted undisputed sway, common Christians lived in matrimony and followed secular callings almost with a bad conscience. Even princes would, on their death-bed, put on the shabby cowl of a monk to become partakers of his superabundant good works. Simeon the Stylite, who stood on a pillar for thirty years, a marvel of holiness. The Indian dervish. — Even Christians themselves deem their being faithful in a secular calling something mean, inferior, and of little account. Doing something out of the ordinary commands their admiration.

What does our text say? A beautiful morning on Lake Genesaret. We recognize Peter, John, and James. Believers and disciples of Christ. How do we find them? Standing on pillars? in monasteries? leading an idle life of self-contemplation? — We see ships "standing by the lake." One was Simon's, v. 3. No pleasure boats. — Nets. Men washing and mending them. Had toiled all night. Prepare for new work. — Now Jesus comes. Do they feel ashamed of being found at work? Flee and hide themselves? Quickly turn their nets, etc., over to old Zebedee and the helpers? Do they make excuse? Does Jesus disown them, rebuke them for not being in monasteries yet, but still at their dirty nets? They even tell Him of last night's experience, and He directs them to make a new effort, and crowns it with a success such as they had never seen before.

We see, a Christian may work. Labor, even common, mean, low, dirty work, does not conflict with his heavenly calling. Oily overalls, dust and soot on hands and face, do not disfigure the spiritual king and priest of God, do not soil the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness he has put on by faith. Can very well in such outward condition converse with Jesus and pray to God, who owns him as His child. His daily work does not hinder him in the exercise of his heavenly calling. On the contrary, when done in the proper spirit, from love to God and his fellow-man, all that he does are good works with which all the much-admired holiness of monks and nuns cannot be compared. A school of faith and Christian virtues. In abundance and in want. If surprised by death while engaged in his calling, not on wrong or doubtful paths. So daily work and heavenly calling are by no means incompatible.

## 2. A Christian SHOULD work.

God's will and ordinance. Peter not the only man: "Let down your nets!" "At Thy word . . .," v. 5. "In the sweat of thy face . . .," Gen. 3, 19. Even the man blessed of the Lord is told, not as a curse, but as a blessing and promise: "Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands," Ps. 128, 2. Christians are admonished: "*Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,*" 1 Thess. 4, 11. As a sign of true conversion, the penitent thief is to steal no more, rather labor, working with his

hands, Eph. 4, 28. Even thus: "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat," 2 Thess. 3, 10.

Labor God's means by which He feeds and provides. Feeds sparrows and ravens, clothes lilies. So also, and still more so, *man*. But He wants him to work. "In the sweat of thy face. . . ." "Eat the labor of thine hands." "If any man would not work, neither should he eat." Even in Paradise no life of idleness. Adam kept the garden.—Fed Israel with manna, but did not have it fall in their mouths; scattered it over field for them to gather. Did not make fish leap into Peter's ship. Let down the nets. Earth brings forth, but man is to till it.

Work a blessing and a necessity. Life on earth would be intolerable without it. Proverbs say nothing good of idleness. Work keeps from sin and crime. As means to quench evil desires. Catechism mentions alongside of God's Word and prayer also *industry*, that means work. When David was idling at home, he fell into temptations and sin. When "working not at all," Christians "walk disorderly," 2 Thess. 3, 11. *Our daily bread.*

### 3. *But a Christian must not ONLY work.*

Work not to be considered mean. But can be overestimated. Some put their entire righteousness in being able to say: Am I not a faithful worker, provide for my household? What lack I yet? But as eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage are no sin, but must not constitute a man's whole life, so that, too, is a very meager biography: He worked. Man no beast of burden, or a machine to run as long as it lasts. Has a soul, immortal soul; is intended for another life. That is *the* life. Called to salvation. "Seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness," Matt. 6, 33. Treasure and heart, conversation and home in heaven.

So Peter. Diligent worker. All night. Again ready "at Thy word." But Jesus comes, wants to preach and be heard. Disciples do not excuse themselves: "Not Sabbath, must work; may be good thing for people that have nothing else to do." They lay down their nets. Here a thing of more importance; that takes precedence.

Even more. Bring a sacrifice. Place ship at Christ's disposal. And when Jesus wants them to "catch men," they leave ship, nets, father, and all. Old Zebedee gives up to the Lord his two young sons whom he needed well enough.

Learn of Peter and his companions: Not only to work diligently, but also to know how to *stop* working when Jesus wants to preach and be heard. Public service, family prayers. Lend ship to Christ's preaching; offerings of earthly goods to church and missions. Offer self to service of Lord. How about a Zebedee having sons for ministry?—Always the kingdom of God, the spiritual, *first*.

And if kingdom of God and His righteousness is our first care, we shall not be the losers, neither as to temporal welfare. He who gave Peter that unprecedented draught *after* that service has promised us: "All these things shall be added unto you." "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

"Faithful in that which is least, faithful in much," Luke 16, 10. "But one thing is needful." "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done."

E. P.